



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC ADOPTS WIRELESS BACKHAUL REFORM AS PART OF BROADBAND ACCELERATION INITIATIVE AND SPECTRUM AND REGULATORY REFORM AGENDAS

*Additional spectrum being made available will expand wireless broadband services
in rural, isolated and underserved communities and promote job creation*

Washington, D.C.—The Federal Communications Commission today made available new spectrum, covering almost two-thirds of the U.S. landmass, for wireless backhaul as part of the FCC's Broadband Acceleration Initiative and its spectrum and regulatory reform agendas.

Building on recommendations in the FCC's National Broadband Plan, today's actions will speed the rollout of fourth-generation (4G) broadband networks, accelerate the role of expanded wireless broadband communications in national economic revitalization and job creation, and bring new broadband services to rural areas where microwave is often the only feasible backhaul option. By removing outdated regulatory restrictions, the FCC is also continuing its regulatory reform agenda, which has resulted in the elimination of more than 50 unneeded regulations and efforts to eliminate dozens of unnecessary data collections.

Microwave, or wireless backhaul, facilities are an essential component of many broadband networks, particularly mobile wireless networks, and are often used for the transmission of data between cell sites, or between cell sites and network backbones. Service providers' use of microwave links as a cost-effective alternative to traditional copper circuits and fiber optic links has increased by approximately 50 percent in recent years.

As the National Broadband Plan had highlighted, removing regulatory barriers to effective spectrum use can result in the unleashing of additional spectrum and drive the national economy. Since wireless backhaul is a critical part of addressing skyrocketing demands for spectrum, making this new spectrum available today is critical to innovation, our economic future, and job creation.

The Report and Order permits fixed microwave operation in several spectrum bands previously reserved for specialized microwave services. The Commission also updates its rules to permit microwave licensees to use adaptive modulation, which will allow them to take advantage of the latest technology to maintain the reliability of critical links. In addition, the Commission provides broadcasters with increased flexibility to use fixed microwave links more freely, by eliminating the outdated "final link" rule.

The Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks comment on additional proposals for making microwave communications more flexible and cost-effective. For example, the Further Notice proposes

to allow smaller antennas in certain microwave bands, as smaller antennas may be cheaper, easier to install, and generate fewer objections in the zoning process. The Further Notice also seeks comment on exempting licensees in non-congested areas from the Commission's efficiency standards, which may make use of fixed microwave links more cost-effective in rural areas.

Action by the Commission August 9, 2011, by Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 11-120). Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners Copps, McDowell, and Clyburn. Separate statements issued by Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners Copps, McDowell, and Clyburn.

Docket No.: WT Docket No. 10-153.

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